Shri Gurdev Singh, father of Lance Naik Jagsir Singh died and Smt. Hazra Begam, mother of Sapper Mohammad Arif expired during 2002. Further, on investigation it was also learnt that Mrs. Noorchasmi Khatun *alias* Gudia wife of Sapper Mohammad Arif got remarried to Shri Toufique in April, 2003. The information regarding these personnel being in the custody of Law Enforcement Agency in Pakistan was received in December, 2003. Consequently, the families were informed regarding their whereabouts and well being.

**Compassionate appointment**

†325. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for appointment on compassionate ground in various departments of Ministry of Defence received by Government during last three years till date;

(b) the number of persons who have been given appointments each year out of the applications so received and the number of persons whose applications have been rejected alongwith the number of pending cases; and

(c) the reasons for rejected and pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) As per extant policy on compassionate appointment, only 5% of the Group 'C & 'D' vacancies to be filled up through direct recruitment are available for making appointment on compassionate grounds. Large number of cases are pending or have to be rejected due to non-availability of adequate vacancies for the purpose.

**Fabrication of Aluminium Caskets by DRDO**

326. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had expressed its ability to indigenously design and fabricate Aluminium caskets which were imported from USA at a very high cost as reported by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG);

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.